

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

**KAY IVEY**  
GOVERNOR

(334) 242-7100  
FAX: (334) 242-0937

STATE OF ALABAMA

301867

April 1, 2021

Allison Davis  
Director, Office of Proceedings  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20423

**ENTERED**  
**Office of Proceedings**  
**April 1, 2021**  
**Part of**  
**Public Record**

Dear Ms. Davis:

It has been brought to my attention that Amtrak filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) seeking an order to restore passenger service along the Gulf Coast between New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Alabama. On behalf of the State of Alabama, I would urge the STB to require Amtrak to complete a study of the impacts of this service before it considers Amtrak's application.

Alabama businesses and important transportation hubs like the Port of Mobile depend upon reliable and safe freight service over the lines on which Amtrak proposes to operate. It is important for all stakeholders to understand the impact of Amtrak's proposal and to determine what additional infrastructure might be required to avoid negative impacts of the proposed new service.

For several years, Alabama has withheld funding for new Gulf Coast passenger service because of our concern that any economic benefit from new passenger rail service will be outweighed by the potential harm to freight rail service based on the current infrastructure. I am particularly concerned about the impact to the Port of Mobile, which has been critical to Alabama's substantial growth in exports in recent years.

An operational modeling study is needed to adequately understand the impact of new Gulf Coast passenger service on freight rail traffic. This study will help to identify what additional infrastructure may be necessary to support passenger service while both preserving the existing level and quality of freight service and accommodating the anticipated growth of freight movement through the Port of Mobile and the region more broadly. This information is also critical to understanding Alabama's long-term financial commitments in connection with this passenger service.

I understand that Amtrak recently refused to renew a joint agreement with CSX and Norfolk Southern for a comprehensive modeling study that was close to being finished. The STB should not allow Amtrak to restore service until that study has been completed. Without a completed operational modeling study, Alabama will not commit to providing any financial support to new Gulf Coast passenger service.

As Governor, I ask that you give every consideration to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Ivey".

Kay Ivey  
Governor